

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 281030Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4929

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1863

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, SS, AG

SUBJECT: SPANIS SAHARA

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH SECYGEN OF FOREIGN MINISTRY ABDELMALEK BENHABYLES ON JULY 26 I PRESENTED HIM WITH COPY OF REVOLUTIION AFRICAINE WITH ARTICLE ON US MILITARY PRESENCE IN CANARIES (REPORTED SEPTTEL). I SAID ARTICLE AS FAR AS WE CONCERNED WON GOLD MEDAL FOR INVENTIVENESS AND IMAGINATION. WE PRESUMED ARTICLE WAS CREATION OF CANARY ISLAND LIBERATION FRONT WHICH HAD MAN-AND-WIFE OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN ALGIERS. WE WERE ACCUSTOMED TO THIS SORT OF THING BUT WISHED ALGERIANS TO REALIZE THERE NO TRUTH TO ALLEGATIONS IN

ARTICLE THAT WE HAD CONCENTRATED FORCES IN CANARIES.

2. BENHABYLES SAID HE SUGGESTED THSIS WAS REPRINT OF ARTICLE WHICH HAD APPEARED ELSEWHERE RATHER THAN BEING CREATION OF ANYONE IN ALGERIA. IN ANY EVENT, ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN REVOLUTION AFRICAINE OR OTHER JOURNALS IN ALGERIA WERE NOT OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OF

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ALGERIAN POLICY. ALGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY WAS

ENUNCIATED BY PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTRY, NOT BY MAGAZINES. HE HAD NOT SEEN THE ARTICLE BEFORE AND DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS IN IT, BEYOND WHAT I HAD TOLD HIM, BUT HE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME OBSERVATIONS ON OUR POLICY IN SAHARA.

3. ARTICLE IN QUESTION, HE SAID, REFLECTED OPINION IN ALGERIA WHICH HAD BEEN FORMED BY NEWS OF AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT WITH MOROCCANS. IF WE HAD BEEN NEUTRAL IN DEED AS WELL AS IN WORK THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO SUCH OPINION. BUT WHEN ALGERIANS SAW COMMANDER OF SIXTH FLEET VISITING MOROCCO AT PARTICULARLY CRITICAL JUNCTURE IT WAS INTERPRETED AS SIGN OF US SUPPORT FOR MOROCCAN POSITION. SIMILARLY, WHEN THEY SAW MASSIVE QUANTITIES OF ARMS GOING TO MOROCCO FROM US, THEY INTERPRETED THAT AS AN INDICATION WE SUPPORTED MOROCCAN AGGRESSION IN SAHARA. ALGERIA HAS NO CLAIMS IN SAHARA. IT WAS SUPPORTING PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ITS INHABITANTS. US SHOULD ALSO SUPPORT THAT PRINCIPLE.

4. I SAID WE HAD NO INTEREST IN SAHARA ITSELF AND FOUND OURSELVES IN DIFFICULT POSITION BETWEEN COUNTRIES WITH WHOM WE WISHED TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WHO WERE AT ODDS OVER THIS PIECE OF TERRITORY. CONTRARY TO PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE'S APPARENT BELIEF, WE HAD NOT PRESSURED SPANISH TO MAKE DEAL WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. WE REMAINED NEUTRAL ON SUBSTANCE OF QUESTION. OUR ARMS DELIVERIES WERE PART OF ON-GOING SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WHICH ALREADY ESTABLISHED WELL BEFORE CRISIS ERUPTED.

5. QVENHABYLES SAID HE KNEW WE HAD NOT PGPSSURED SPANISH. SPANIS HAD MAKE THEIR OWN DECISION. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WAS CONTINUED AMERICAN COLLUSION WITH MOROCCO AND WE COULD NOT BLAME ALGERIANS FOR SUSPECTING THAT WE WERE PALYING STRATEGIC GAME INVOLVING SAHARA AND CANARIES.

6. COMMENT: THIS IF FIRST TIME OFFICIAL OF GOA HAS
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RAISED COMSIXTHFLT VISIT WITH US. IT INTERESTING
CONFIRMATION THAT THEY ARE WATCHING OUR NAVAL ACTIVITIES.
PARKER

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NNN

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